

**Sermon Revd David Treharne. 7 May 2023. Easter 6.**

**Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life for King Charles, for us and for the Nation**

It was an amazing act of worship at Westminster Abbey yesterday (the Coronation). Not just the pomp and ritual, the stunning music but the return, or remembrance of Christian identity as part of our nation and way of life. No, what was really striking for me, most of all, and perhaps it shouldn't have surprised us, is how Christ centred the service was... and because it was so direct and clear it showed something of how the Nation has drifted from God and its Christian roots.

Reminded me of 'Lest we forget'... words first used in an 1897 Christian poem written by Rudyard Kipling called "Recessional", that a nation should not forget the true source of its prosperity and success... namely God himself.

The hope to be found in and through Christ was fantastic and steadfast. I wonder if we have lost hope in the person of Jesus Christ?

All the way through the service Christ, Christ and Christ.

- Serving/Service was the theme from the start... following the pattern of Christ who came not to be served but to serve.
- The reading from Colossians 1... Christ is the image of the invisible God... and the importance of Scripture. "The most precious thing this world has to offer. Here is wisdom. Here is the royal Law."
- The Orb... the world and all earthly kingdoms are under the rule of Christ.
- Hymn: Christ is made the sure foundation
- All that went on in the Abbey was in the context of Holy Communion... Jesus, the bread of life and the resurrection and the life.

Fittingly, today's reading has Jesus declaring himself as the way, the truth and the life. Jesus is the only way, the truth and the life for King Charles, for us and for the nations.

### **The Way of Jesus Christ**

Jesus shows us and opens up to us the way to God, the way to heaven and the way to live. We and King Charles are called to walk in the footsteps of Christ to our heavenly home. To follow his example in this life. To follow the One who came not to be served but to serve. Jesus exemplifies the way of service and ways of gentleness and peace and justice. In serving Christ there is perfect freedom.

Jesus shows us something vitally important about power. Power is not to be grasped and held onto and exerted for selfish gain and neither is status. Power and status are to be used in service, in love and for the common good.

As Archbishop Justin said... his throne was a Cross, his crown was made of thorns and his regalia were his wounds. Reminded me of Philippian 2. Imitating Christ's humility. Having the same attitude. Looking to the interests of others.

This is the way to lead. This is way to live.

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In Christ we find the pattern for how we are to use our power and influence. In Christ we find the way to live to the glory of God and fulfilment of our humanity in relationship.

### **The Truth of Jesus Christ**

Jesus gives us the truth about who God is. Indeed he is God!

“If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.” If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. If you look at Jesus, read about Jesus... you’re looking at and reading about God himself! “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

These words follow on wonderfully from yesterday where in Colossians Jesus is the image of the invisible God... Col 1. The One who brings us from darkness to light. The one who creates, forgives, redeems. Luke 4 declares Jesus heals the broken hearted, delivers the captives, gives sight to the blind.

King Charles was urged and we are urged to know the truth about Jesus Christ. It’s revealed in the Scriptures and revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

The Spirit leads us to Christ. The Spirit leads us into all truth. If we live by the Spirit we’ll keep in step with the Spirit and in step with truth.

In Jesus Christ we find truth, honesty and integrity.

He leads us in the right path, the right way and redirects, speaks to us challenges us, calls us when we wander from the truth.

How easy it is to twist truth to suit ourselves. At the very start of the service yesterday the King said, “In his name and after his example (that is Jesus Christ) I come not to be served but to serve.” Unfortunately, the ITV commentator said, the King is pledging to follow the way of Jesus who said I have come not to serve but to be served.

All that power on display, could easily be twisted and used and justified for ill rather than good.

- Might not mercy! Bind up the captives. Defend evil and resist the good...
- The Bible. Misused to justify sin rather than for justification by faith.

- Sword... used as a weapon to destroy rather than for justice and mercy,
- The glove preventing blood from staining the hand rather than for using power softly

We all have power... all of us. We all have a sphere of influence, our own little kingdoms where we exert power for good or for ill.

The truth is that we have no power but from above... and how we use the power that is given is to be found in the example of Jesus (Phil 2 again).

Kings and peasants alike are subject to the reign of God.

### **The Life of Jesus Christ**

In Him, that is Christ, there is life. I have come that you might have life. Jn 10.

Christ has given us life and shows us how to live.

King Charles was and is called to live out the life and the truth found in Christ Jesus... to exercise justice and mercy, to look after the orphan and the widow, to set an example of loving service. We too are invited to receive life... to receive Jesus Christ... and to live out that life (his life) ... to love and to serve in the name of Jesus... to bear the fruit of good works generically and fulfil the duties and specific calling we have from God.

The call is tough. It's weighty. Looking at the figure of Charles, a mere mortal... the weight of the calling to lead peoples and nations under God and in the footsteps of Christ was/is massive.

Hence the central and most important part of the coronation... the anointing

"You CANNOT do this on your own... in your own strength"

The need for total dependency on God... to carry out the role... the calling.

It is the same for us.

At our baptism we received the same anointing with holy oil... to carry out the weighty tasks, the weighty calling... to follow the way and truth and life of Jesus Christ all our days. We need the Holy Spirit to work within us.

King Charles was called upon to recognise and follow Jesus is the way, the truth and the life... and so are we. With steadfast hope and confidence in the person of Jesus Christ, may we courageously pledge ourselves to this journey with the abundant love, mercy and help of God all the way.